

Land Use and Environmental Service Agency  
(Code Enforcement)

# Plumbing Q & A 2006

Attention: □ Denotes a new question!  
■ Denotes a revised/revisited question.

October 2006

## **General:**

1) (Q) *The 2006 Code references securing water heater support with mortar. When would this requirement be applicable?*

(A) It is applicable when placing the water heater on a stand more than one course high. Multiple courses shall be laid with mortar.

2) (Q) *Does the outside veneer (brick , vinyl, wood, etc.) have to be removed to install FHA plates when mechanics notch the walls when installing piping/HVAC?*

(A) DOI (residential Ad Hoc Committee) has ruled:

1. Interior non-bearing/non-braced walls do not require use of a metal plate.
2. Exterior and load bearing walls would require a metal tie on the cut side of the plate only.

*This item is typically enforced by the Building Inspectors. M/P inspectors should e-mail or otherwise notify the appropriate Building Inspector and record same in their inspection notes.*

3) (Q) *What does the term “grandfathered” mean?*

(A) The term refers to a system, appliance or installation, installed prior to state codes or under a previous version of the Code, but would be considered non Code compliant if installed today.

Grandfathering is allowed with these stipulations:

- There shall be no change in the occupancy use.
- The installation or appliance may not be disturbed, altered or replaced.

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• The installation or appliance shall not be considered a “Life Safety Issue” by the Code Official.

4) *(Q) Will a Plumbing Inspector delay a final inspection if a large water heater (boiler) has not been inspected by NC Department of Labor?*

(A) Yes, on electric water heaters. The Plumbing Inspector will however authorize a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) until the boiler inspector approves the installation. The Mechanical Inspector performs this duty for heating and gas fired appliances.

5) *(Q) May a grading contractor install site utilities (sewer/water) using the issued grading permit?*

(A) NO! First, the sewer and water system may only be installed by a NC Licensed Plumbing Contractor or a NC Licensed General Contractor with a utility designation. Secondly, they must have a Plumbing permit issued to them describing the scope of work prior to the installation of any piping.

6) *(Q) When should rodent proofing be required?*

(A) Rodent proofing should be provided on outside walls where openings around ducts or piping would allow the entry of rodents into the structure. These openings may be covered with sheet metal, pipe escutcheons, or filled with mortar or grout. The chapter on rodent proofing is located in the appendix J (2002) and appendix H (2006)

7) *(Q) Does the acrylic drain line from a expansion valve need to be insulated when placed in an unconditioned environment?*

(A) No.

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8)□ (Q) *Will the State Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating, and Fire Sprinkler Contractors honor the Alternate materials, methods and equipment approval, (Section 105.2, 2006) that I applied for and received from the local Code Official?*

(A) Unfortunately, the Board doesn't seem to honor Code Section 105.2.

## ***Drainage:***

1) (Q) *May a developer utilize the NCDENR process for utilities installed on a commercial site?*

(A) We will consider the NCDENR process an approved inspection alternative *provided:*

1. Site work consists of multiple structures with the associated collector system.
2. Structures involve multiple owners/tenants (i.e., apartments, condominiums, malls, business parks, etc.)

## ***Note:***

1. NCDENR process is NOT available for single owner/tenant occupancies (i.e., schools, daycares, business, residential homes, etc.) These types shall follow the standard permitting/inspection process.
2. The "Right to Construct" permit from NCDENR shall be obtained prior to the commencement of work.

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3. There is a substantial difference in the flow calculations for utilities and the dfu calculations for plumbing drainage systems. REMEMBER, there may never be a restriction (reduction) in the piping in the direction of flow.

2) (Q) *Would a stereo install bay in a Big Box Store, require oil/water separators?*

(A) No! Only engine/transmission repair and oil change establishments where there are floor drains subject to an oily environment. Occupancies without oil and/or bays without drains would not require a separator.

3) (Q) *May piping support be attached to roof or floor sheathing?*

(A) No! The intent of the Code is that hangers or strapping placed to support the weight of a pipe, be attached to the building framing/structure and not to a finish (i.e. plywood, OSB, etc.)

*Excluding lateral fastening for vibration purposed or lateral sway.*

4) (Q) *When is a backwater valve required on a hub drain or floor drain installed in a crawl space?*

(A) The Code does not address backwater valves installed on separate, trapped branch lines. Backwater valves are required on drainage systems installed below the first upstream manhole.

5) (Q) *Does the Code require a septic tank to be filled when it is abandoned on a sewer change-out?*

(A) No! Our policy is to require capping of the old line to the tank.

6) (Q) *What type of material may be used on a water heater safety pan drain?*

(A) Any material listed in table 605.6 or 702.1, per DOI.

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7) (Q) *May HVAC condensate be connected to a water heater safety pan drain?*

(A) No!. We do allow pan drains to be connected together provided you increase the drain size, "One pipe size", every time a pan is connected.

8) (Q) *Are mid-story guides required on vertical piping?*

(A) Yes! Table 308.5 would require mid-story guides on piping 2" and smaller. This requirement is one we have been sporadic in enforcing.

*We will begin stringent enforcement on Nov. 1st, 2006.*

9) (Q) *Does a sewage lift have to be accessible under a cover?*

(A) The Code states:

**712.3.2 Sump pit.** The sump pit shall be not less than 18 inches (457 mm) in diameter and 24 inches (610 mm) deep, unless otherwise approved. The pit shall be accessible and located such that all drainage flows into the pit by gravity. The sump pit shall be constructed of tile, concrete, steel, plastic or other approved materials. The pit bottom shall be solid and provide permanent support for the pump. The sump pit shall be fitted with a gas-tight removable cover adequate to support anticipated loads in the area of use. The sump pit shall be vented in accordance with Chapter 9.

10) (Q) *Does a soil or waste stack have to be vented?*

(A) Not until it reaches 5 stories. All fixtures connected to the stack must be properly vented.

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11) (Q) *The 2006 NC Plumbing Code requires that the horizontal portion of the washing machine line be 3" piping. Does the line have to increase to 4" as it exits the foundation wall on it's way to septic tank?*

(A) No, it may stay 3".

## **Water Piping:**

1) (Q) *Is backflow protection required when connecting a fire hydrant line to a domestic water supply?*

(A) Yes. Fire hydrant lines, lawn irrigation and fire sprinkler lines are considered contaminated or questionable lines and would require backflow protection when they connect to potable water or "combo" (both potable and fire combined) lines.

## **Fixtures:**

1) (Q) *May the water heater T&P valve, discharge into the safety pan?*

(A) Yes, provided the water heater is installed in a ventilated space.

2) (Q) *May a water heater be installed on a shelf above a washing machine?*

(A) Yes.

3) (Q) *May a water heater be installed in a recessed area (alcove) behind a washing machine or dryer?*

(A) No! A water heater may not be installed where another piece of equipment would have to be moved or removed for repair and/or replacement. This would also include water heaters installed in cabinetry.

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4) (Q) *Does the glass in shower doors have to be tempered?*

(A) Yes, per the NC Building Code.

5) (Q) *Do fixtures that are apart of a business process have to be handicap?*

(A) Fixtures, such as chemical lab sinks, doctor's hand wash sinks, nurse's station sink, clinical lab sink or sinks located in a commercial kitchen; do not have to meet the handicap code requirements.

6) (Q) *May composting water closets be used?*

(A) They are allowed on a case by case basis.

7) □ (Q) *What are the requirements to be exempt a "storage" occupancy from furnishing plumbing fixtures?*

(A) The project shall meet the following criteria:

1. Standalone storage occupancy.
2. Absolutely "NO" heat provided.
3. Periodic use (once per week max.)